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was published in a series of volumes entitled, "*Les origines de la France contemporaine*," and met with the disapproval even of some of his most ardent admirers. To a Frenchman his admiration of Englishmen and of English institutions seems excessive, and it is not difficult to understand that the man whose political views were founded on such thoughts as those we find in his essay on Jefferson should not find many who fully sympathise with him in a country like the France of the present day.

He was a worker and a reader to the end of his long life. "Each generation," he said, "must read a few pages of the volume which has no ending. When the time comes for me to close my books, I will do so with a feeling of my own weakness. I see the limits of my own range of thought, not those of the mind of mankind."

G. L. F.

NATURAL CO-ORDINATION OF SUBJECTS OF INSTRUCTION.

BY THE REV. C. H. PAREZ.

IN the interesting Report on the Rural Schools of North-West France, by Mr. Cloudesley Brereton, in Vol. VII. of the "Special Reports issued by the Board of Education," there is a paragraph at page 139 on the curriculum as a whole, which appears to me to contain a germinal thought, which, when allowed free scope, should prove to be of the utmost value, and render the instruction of young children even more captivating than it is often at present made to be by the loving care of our Kindergarten teachers. The principle enunciated in this paragraph is that of dove-tailing, or more than dove-tailing, the different subjects so that they interlock one with another, mutually explaining and illustrating one another, "not really detachable, as parts of a watch" that can be taken to pieces, but members of one body, each explicable by its relation to the others.

Now, the idea of inter-connection of the various parts of the school curriculum is not wholly new; it has been for some time in the minds of our teachers, especially, as I fancy, in our Infant Schools; the various lessons have been made in this way to illustrate one another, and additional interest has thus been imparted to each. But when reflection is excited as to the underlying reason for this inter-connection of the subjects, there begins to arise in the mind a doubt whether the principle has already ever been thoroughly carried out. For, the *raison d'être* for this close interweaving of the mental efforts of the little ones, what is it but the recognition of the excellence of *naturalness* in the directing of the children's attention, of making all attempts at teaching to be drawn forth by what excites a child's inquisitiveness in things presented to its notice? Now, if this principle is to be carried out fully, then the idea of "lessons" ought to be relegated and replaced rather by that of "talks"; not only so, but even the *apparatus* of lessons ought at first, at any rate, to be kept in the background. The moment the apparatus is produced, that moment there enters into the child's mind the idea of a "lesson," that is, of work; almost inevitably of, to a certain extent, drudgery. The expectation of a "lesson," with the customary paraphernalia of, it may be, the beadwires, or, it may be, the form-and-colour box, or what not, dulls the interest of the children; the method is one that is artificially devised, not that arises naturally out of their surroundings or from some object of interest submitted to their notice. If the children's minds are to be engaged in a life-like way, then the oftener the routine of the lesson idea can be avoided the better will be the result. Froebel did much for the children he loved so well, yet it is recognised that his "gifts" are of an artificial description In Nature one finds imperfectly rounded bodies, as apples, nuts, oranges, &c.,—not spheres; one finds curved lines, not straight; the wavy lines of leaves, the rounded, irregular outlines of clouds, not the straight edges and plane faces of the cube. The one thing that Nature seems to abhor more than any other—unless under the term Nature the imaginative products of the human mind be included—is a straight line. Nature again seems to delight in the odd numbers three and five, which rarely enter into the artificially devised "gifts." The four-sided figure of straight lines is the conception of the human mind. When Johnnie and Mary wish to divide a piece of cake or an apple between them, it would no doubt be inconvenient to make the division by curved lines and surfaces; the apple is divided by a plane surface or an approximation thereto; the cake is probably made into squares or oblongs. The science of geometry arose from the necessities of agriculture. The field is more easily divided, whether for partition among cultivators, or for various crops, in oblongs than in any other way. The four-sided figure is among the most convenient for men's operations. Yet how seldom the number four is found in nature. It may be said, indeed, that there is the obvious instance of quadrupeds; but is it not a more correct conception to regard them as having two fore-legs and two hind-legs, two pairs of like things, rather than grouping together two sets of unlike things under one heading? In the same way, the insect should be rather described as having a pair of three rather than as having six legs. How often do the numbers three and five occur in Nature? Yet how seldom are they brought under the notice of young children? Yet the instances are close at hand, at the very door. The commonest weed will probably supply instances of it. The petals and sepals are generally in threes or fives; the stamens should probably be arranged in pairs of these numbers. Leaves are partitioned into an odd number of segments, three, five, seven; so in zoology, the number five appears more frequently—seems to be more favoured by Dame Nature than any other. Yet how seldom does it figure in the school curriculum? Only, with the exception of the reference to the human hand, by the introduction before the children of the "pentagon," dreadful to them by its name, and as far removed from anything that will ever naturally present itself to them as can be conceived. It is a curious fact that used often to come under my notice that in giving a lesson on "A Fraction" to, say, the Fourth Standard, the teacher would confine himself to halves, fourths, eighths, seldom venturing on the odd denominators, three, five, &c., which, however, would have been really the more effective ones for the purpose of the lesson, because carrying the children into the more general conception of a fraction rather than to that to which familiarity had enslaved them. But there is no reason why our infants should not from natural objects be familiarised with the numbers three, five, &c., and even be prepared for the comprehension of such things as "thirds" and "fifths."

But there is no need to make a special "lesson" on these numbers; and here comes in the principle of the interweaving of the ideas which need not be made entirely separate subjects of instruction. We wish more than we have done formerly to open children's eyes to things around them, especially to make country children find a pleasure and an interest in rural sights and sounds. The weeds that continually meet their eyes; the flowers of their gardens; birds and their habits, &c. These are things in which children may be easily drawn to take a delight, and only do not readily find such delight because there has not been the kindly eye and hand of someone to direct them. And then when their observation is turned towards such things, the arithmetical lesson, if such it must be named, will present itself without being specially called in. It is indeed natural to children to count. "Counting," indeed, though there may be something indefinite in the term, seems to me a pleasanter term to use in regard to infants than "arithmetic."

It happened accordingly to me to use the former word in my reports upon infant schools, until the *force majeure* of red tape intervened, and compelled obedience to the adoption of the more formal and formidable term "arithmetic." But then, is there never to be a formal arithmetic lesson in an infant school? Well, there are limits no doubt to the adaptiveness of the most lively Kindergarten teachers, and there may be a right and proper use of the stereotyped lesson with the bead wires; but such lessons should be at any rate infrequent; not the daily food; should be brought in occasionally as a change; a seldom-used means of "fixing" what had been previously "developed"—to use terms borrowed from the photographer's art—in the children's minds. In the case of the young children, the "development" is of infinitely more value towards mental training than the "fixing." The natural should be the groundwork; the artificial should be brought in only at the end, or at any rate previously tabooed, so far as the capacity of the teacher admits.

But, of course, all instruction cannot be confined to references to external nature. This must be admitted, but it is important to note the reason *why* this is so. Man and his works are after all part of nature. It is this unfortunate interposition of that disturbing element, the mind of man, in the world, that necessitates the giving of so much that is artificial to the school curriculum. The child, innocent as he is of the fact, is the heir of the ages. Reading is a very artificial thing. To a thoroughly illiterate person the ease of decipherment of the characters of letters and words shown by a fluent reader has in fact the appearance of something magical. Reading and writing of course go together, and with them to some extent must be joined arithmetic, inasmuch as it also is dependent upon a written character or symbol. How slowly, through what long ages of toil and upward endeavour have these arts been brought by the human mind to their present perfection! Here no doubt is the great crux of the teacher. How to facilitate to the minds of the children the manipulation of these artificial symbols with the least possible artificiality of method? How to make the entrance into these arcana as little abrupt as possible? Of the three "R's," reading is the one which in this respect presents the greatest difficulty. Writing may be connected with drawing, which should certainly precede it, and the writing of letters should of course be made to follow upon the demonstration of their use as symbols in reading; it is in the latter therefore that the greater difficulty to the teacher arises and has to be surmounted. Arithmetic may and should be co-ordinated with the affairs of ordinary life, such as are in the field of the child's own needs and thoughts or come naturally within its own observation; but here again, it is when the explanation of symbols has to be undertaken that difficulty is felt. The abstract symbol must of course be placed beside the concrete object, or at least some pictorial representation of it. And to this adoption of the maxim, "from the known to the unknown," may perhaps also be wisely added to some extent the illustration of the method of making the instruction go along with the actual evolution of each subject, as it occurred historically in its progressive development by the human mind. This method, as is well known, is insisted upon by educationists of great name; among others by the apostle of naturalistic teaching, Herbert Spencer. His theory is often regarded as somewhat of a "fad," and to carry it out in detail would be no doubt tedious and unnecessary. Yet it might well be borne in mind and used with advantage to a modified extent.

In teaching reading therefore, those friendly guides of the young mind are probably justified who begin by placing before the child the picture, say, of a bat, and beside it the word "bat," the ideograph first, afterwards the "phonetic." The picture at once asserts itself to the infant mind as a representation of the object; the symbol is no doubt arbitrary, but by observation and repetition becomes associated in it with the picture, and so with the idea of the thing. By beheading and betailing the word "bat," the force of the component elements, the single letters can be shown; and afterwards other words, as "mat," &c., can be similarly treated; and later the variations of "fan," "man," "pin," "tin," &c.—object and symbol being ever linked, and helped by attempts at drawing, and gradually also by writing.

Similarly, in unriddling the mystery of arithmetical notation; every good teacher would naturally above the "tens" column exhibit actual bundles of things in tens, or pictures of baskets containing, it may be, *ten* eggs or *ten* marbles each, in a different coloured chalk from that used for the "units" column. But might it not be as well in introducing first the mystery of the "cipher," to adopt to some extent the evolutionary method, and to make the principle of the cipher attractive by comparison with the more cumbrous arithmetical system previously in vogue? The latter, indeed, has its own recommendations. In adding 5 and 6, or 5 and 8, we nowadays rightly teach children to split up the 6 and the 8 into 5 + 1; 5 + 3; and so to arrive at the totals of 10 + 1, 10 + 3, to suit our notation; but this is even more easily shown in the Roman method, where V. and VI., or V. and VIII. indicate at a glance the separation of the 5's; while the comparison of the methods of representing the totals as XI., 11; and XIII., 13 respectively will be easy and interesting. This may lead on to showing the superiority of the later method, when larger numbers, such as 13 and 23 have to be dealt with, and enable the young child of modern days to rejoice that he was not born a Roman, and by increase of interest the more easily to surmount this early "pons asinorum."

There is an anecdote of Froebel, the child-lover, leading out a group of children to a hill outside a village; leading them and beguiling them with similar art to that of the Pied Piper of Hamelyn, but with benevolent instead of malicious intent, until with him they found themselves by surprise at the top. The hill difficulty has somehow to be surmounted; when it has been clomb, a wide plateau with many devious paths expands before the eye; and those who have gained the summit for themselves will choose different paths. One will naturally betake himself to fields of literature, or to scientific observation; one will find his natural vent in pursuing the more abstract studies of mathematics or even metaphysics. Once the hill is clomb, each to his taste; but what the teacher has to do is to make the ascent as little difficult as possible, to ease the slope. Of all the methods that may be adopted for this purpose none seems to be more hopeful than that which is indicated in the paragraph above referred to. Not merely to coordinate the subjects of instruction, but to introduce them and to carry on the instruction in them unartificially, unabruptly, weaving them one into another and drawing them out in a natural way from the surroundings of the children, thus incidentally combining "naturkünde" and the reasoning and reflective powers of mind. This surely is the method of the future; in it lies the secret of wholesome, tearless instruction.

THE FÉSOLE CLUB PAPERS.

BY W. G. COLLINGWOOD.

[These twenty-four letters to beginners and amateurs in sketching were written from 1891 onwards, at the command of the Editor, in order to form a correspondence-class in connection with the work of the *Parents' Review*. The class ran successfully until, as the last article said, we had to bring to an end both our series of papers and our Fésole Club, because it was impossible to carry on the class as it was then constituted without the occasional paper, and impossible to write the paper, adapting it to new members, without going back over the old ground and wearying the general reader.

The Editor has now complimented me by proposing a reprint. It is not intended to start the club afresh, but perhaps the articles may be of some use, especially as I hope to add a little gossip about the working of the scheme, and tell how my pupils managed to follow the directions of their unseen and unknown teacher, and when they failed, and, so far as I can, why they failed. In that way, perhaps, the new series may have a new interest, being to some extent an object-lesson in one form of education.]

I.—WO DIE CITRONEN BLÜH'N.

LATE in the autumn of 1882 I was travelling with Mr. Ruskin in Italy. We had driven up from Florence in the heat of the day; sketched Fra Angelico's monastery—the "Tuscan artist's" observatory that Milton speaks of, on "the top of Fésole"; with sunlight slanting across its pines and purple summits of Apennine looking in among their stems; and we went down before dusk to see the ancient walls of the town. Just outside the gate, my guide, philosopher and friend showed me a strange thing: how the Cyclopean masonry of the foundations seemed to pass by hardly noticeable degrees into a natural escarpment of living rock, so bedded and jointed that it looked like handiwork of men. It seemed that the prehistoric builders had fixed upon that natural feature as the opportunity for their citadel, and only sought to complete and continue the natural wall by fitting together such blocks of native limestone as lay at hand, exactly after the pattern of Nature, bed to bed, and joint to joint.